ON06025

# Research Report

Issued by the Research Centre
Program Department

Scarborough
Board of
Education

93-02032/

# THE LITERACY PROJECT AT SIR WILLIAM OSLER HIGH SCHOOL: YEAR 1, 1990-91

**Marilyn Hale**
**Research Associate**

**#90/91-27**

**June, 1991**

**Lorna Earl Ph.D., Research Director and General Editor**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank first and foremost the Osler staff members listed below who participated in this research. Without their input and insight, this study would not have been possible:

- Dave Buhler
- Stella Dasko
- Jeff Farber
- Susan Grabeck
- June Hall
- Shruti Kant
- Allison Kelsey
- Dave Muir
- Diane Reed

Secondly, thanks go to the following members from the central Board office staff for their participation in the study:

- Linda Goldspink
- Barbara Howes
- Bonnie O'Donoghue
- Don Robb

Finally, the author would like to thank the following Research Centre staff members for their assistance:

- Lorna Earl, Research Director, for assisting in focussing the research,
- Liz Lundy, Research Centre Secretary, for typing the drafts and final copy of the report,
- Clara Ho, Research Associate, for proofing the final study,
- Deborah Austin, Testing Clerk, and Lorraine Ellis, Supply Secretary, for assisting in the revisions.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS | iii |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | v |
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Background of the Project | 1 |
| Purposes of the Research | 2 |
| DATA COLLECTION METHOD | 5 |
| Teacher Interviews | 5 |
| School Administrators and Program Department Staff Interviews | 6 |
| RESULTS | 7 |
| 1. Teacher Interviews | 7 |
| Program Objectives | 7 |
| Target Students | 9 |
| Teaching Strategies | 10 |
| Measurement Techniques | 15 |
| Professional Development and Other Resources | 17 |
| Role of the Teacher Specially Assigned | 19 |
| Future Operation of the Project | 22 |
| Comments | 26 |
| 2. Osler Administrator Interviews | 28 |
| Program Objectives | 28 |
| Professional Development and Other Resources | 29 |
| Role of the Teacher Specially Assigned | 31 |
| Future Operation of the Project | 32 |
| Comments | 33 |
| 3. Program Department Staff Interviews | 34 |
| Program Objectives | 34 |
| Professional Development and Other Resources | 36 |
| Role of the Teacher Specially Assigned | 39 |
| Future Operation of the Project | 40 |
| Comments | 42 |
| SUMMARY OF RESULTS | 45 |
| FUTURE PLANS | 51 |

# INTRODUCTION

## Background of the Project

The Scarborough school system includes two schools devoted to basic level programs: Sir William Osler High School and Maplewood High School. These schools provide services for students who have been diagnosed as functioning below level. Osler's mission statement centres around the "vision that all students will develop at positive self-image and the necessary life skills to enable them to reach their potential and to continue to use their acquired knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to function effectively in society".

It was recognized that, in these schools, the issue of literacy was a central theme that needed to remain in the forefront. To address this issue, a proposal for literacy development at the school was initiated by the committee established for this purpose (chaired by Flora Miller) and approved by the Program Department to begin during the 1990-91 school year. Included in the proposal was a pilot research project, the purpose of which was "to investigate the improvement of literacy levels in the special schools with a view to implementation of such a program in other venues".

In the initial stages of the project, staff from the English Language Centre worked to encourage the school to develop program objectives related to the whole language approach to the teaching of reading. These objectives would then be implemented, with the help of the Teacher Specially Assigned (TSA) to this project.

Once the initial objectives had been outlined, Research Centre staff members were involved in meetings to help the staff members develop a systematic way of measuring their selected objectives.

At the first of these meetings, held with representatives from the Osler staff, it became clear that the innovation would require changes in teaching methods, and that the teachers needed time to work with the TSA to understand the strategies and plan program, before they could consider how to collect data. There was also concern about what was being evaluated, since they were just beginning the literacy project.

The concern expressed by the staff with respect to the research process suggested that evaluation of the impact of the program was premature, since they were still trying to resolve the teaching strategies they would be using in their classrooms related to the whole language objectives they selected.

Since the first year of the project was, indeed, a development year, the research focus became the creation of a description about the implementation of the program by collecting descriptive information from staff and administrators on such topics as teaching strategies, program in the classroom, and resources used. In addition, instrumentation would be selected for later research.

## Purposes of the Research

In his book "The Meaning of Educational Change", Michael Fullan (1982) outlined three broad phases of the change process, Phase I being "the process which leads up to and includes a decision to adopt or proceed with a change". Phase II "involves the first experiences of attempting to put an idea or program into practice", and Phase III refers to "whether the change gets built in as an ongoing part of the system or disappears by way of a decision to discard or through attrition".[1]

---

[1]Michael Fullan, The Meaning of Educational Change, (Toronto: OISE Press, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1982), 39 - 40

Since the literacy project at Osler is progressing from Phase I to Phase II, the research component constituted a formative evaluation (the collecting and reporting of information by the research to help staff members plan, adjust, and improve the program). The researcher focussed initially on describing the project components and preparing for future research involvement.

Specifically, the research this year focussed on the following objectives:

- creating relaxed interactions among school staff, Research staff, and Central program staff
- refining the **objectives** selected by the teachers involved in the project
- isolating the particular **questions** to be addressed by future research
- providing input regarding **methods** for collecting data related to the research questions
- establishing methods of **summarizing** information collected
- conducting **interviews** with key people involved in the pilot phase of the study to collect information to describe key program components of the innovation as implemented in the school and factors that affect the initial implementation process (e.g., strategies, resources, support, etc.)
- creating a **description of the key program components** and the factors that affected the initial year of implementation of the program
- developing a **proposal** for the 1991-92 research project.

## DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Interviews were conducted to collect descriptive information from the six Osler staff members involved in the literacy project, the administrators of the school, and the central administrators responsible for the support and implementation of the project about various aspects of the literacy program being introduced at Osler. At this point in the implementation of the program, this qualitative research technique was used to help the staff with the process.

### Teacher Interviews

The teachers were interviewed once early in 1991, and again toward the end of the school year. The first interview was an informal one done by the researcher who was accompanied by the TSA from the English Language Centre. Discussion centred around the objectives the teachers had established for their classrooms, the methods they were using to implement those objectives, and the methods used to measure whether the students had internalized those objectives.

The second more formal interview was conducted by the researcher and followed a semi-structured format. The results of the second interview (which are summarized in this report), deal not only with the general and specific objectives of the program, and the strategies and evaluation methods used, but also with information on problem areas, target students, staff development, role of the TSA, and plans for the 1991-92 school year regarding objectives, students, and the role of TSA. The final question asked the teachers to describe their expectations regarding the research into the literacy project. In addition to answering the questions, they were given the opportunity to provide additional comments.

## School Administrators and Program Department Staff Interviews

The principal of Osler and the vice-principal involved in the literacy project were interviewed in May, as were the Co-ordinator of English 7-12/OAC; the Assistant Co-ordinator, English Language JK-6; the Teacher Specially Assigned to the Program Department; and, the Associate Superintendent/ Program supervising the project.

Interview questions centred around their objectives for the literacy project this year and next, staff development they have received or provided with respect to the project, sources of support/materials they found useful in implementing the program, their perceptions regarding the role of the TSA assigned to the project, what they would like to find out from the research next year, and any other comments they would like to make.

## RESULTS

This "Results" section contains the interview data for the three different groups of people who were involved in the literacy project during the 1990-91 school year: **Osler teaching staff, Osler administrators,** and **Program Department staff** associated with the project.

When interpreting the results of the interviews the reader should keep in mind that the themes that emerged reflect the opinions of the participants in the literacy project only and not those of the entire school staff.

The information for each group has been summarized under headings that were the actual questions asked during the interview. In some cases, it has been possible to find common themes among respondents; in others, the comments were so varied that they are listed individually.

### *1. Teacher Interviews*

**Program Objectives**

***What do you see as your general objectives for the literacy project this year?***

The objectives being addressed by the Osler staff involved in the literacy project were both cognitive and affective in content:

Cognitive Objectives

- have students involved in the integration of different language skills
- create in students an awareness of reading material available (e.g., books, newspapers) that they can profit from reading
- involve students in looking for resources

- develop a student/teacher working relationship
- improve students' oral skills
- improve literacy skills of students who have none in their own language
- improve the use of "standard English" in an appropriate setting
- improve levels of reading comprehension

Affective Objectives

- enhance and maintain students' enjoyment of language and the desire to develop language skills
- enhance student self-esteem
- change negative responses to school, especially toward academic subjects
- have students read for pleasure (when they are bored they will pick up a book)

***In that framework, what specific objectives did you try to address in the literacy program this year?***

Objectives addressing writing and reading were among several identified by teachers in the classroom:

Writing

- have students write more - feel the desire to write and apply reinforcement when they do so
- as they write more, they will be motivated to write better, especially if they see the reason

Reading

- have students read more to improve their understanding and enjoyment of what they are reading
- encourage students to read
- show them that reading is fun and not a chore

- generate enough interest in reading that they will read on their own
- expose students to reading materials
- look at reading across the curriculum (in Math and P.E.)

Other objectives listed were:

- help students feel familiar with the library and incorporate class-related topics in library sessions
- improve their ability to listen for information and for enjoyment
- enhance their curiosity
- show students a different direction toward literacy
- encourage the development of positive self-esteem in students
- develop English oral language ability in students (many are very verbal in their own language)
- in some cases decrease their use of language - very vocal

## Target Students

***Who were the target students?***

There is not one specific type of student involved in the literacy program. Overall, they range in grade from seven to 12 and in age from 14 to 18. Furthermore, the student population is made up of different subgroups. Along with the traditional Osler students, there are students from English as a Second Language (ESL) requiring upgrading, English as a Second Dialect (ESD), English as a Second Language/Dialect (ESL/D) withdrawal, and Booster which deals with cultural adjustment.

The students have a wide range of life experiences and diverse cultural backgrounds with some students who are Grade 7 transition students, and others who are in a Booster program.

Depending on the class, they may be disinterested students, underchallenged or overchallenged. As may be expected, there is a wide range of intellectual ability: some students have a great deal of difficulty and some are collegiate material. Some are borderline bored, and some are struggling.

In the ESL/D/Booster programs, many are illiterate in their own language, socially immature, and often in their first school setting. The Booster program in particular has students who are not learning disabled, but may have gaps in their education or no education before coming to Canada. Often, they are collegiate bound.

In spite of the great variety of students, they are all seen as having potential.

## Teaching Strategies

***What are the strategies that you have been using to implement these objectives.***

To develop **writing** ability among students, teachers used the following strategies:

- journal writing, use of the computer to develop some of their writing
- independent research/writing assignments
- after library visits, students write a paragraph or two about what they liked or did not like about the stories (did the same after reading newspapers and magazines)

Students were encouraged to develop their **reading** skills in the following ways:

- having the opportunity and incentive for independent reading
- using tape recorders to integrate reading and speaking activities
- reading about characters in a story that they could relate to, about establishing friendships and relationships, especially in school, and appropriate responses
- selecting problems from the newspapers (e.g., Ann Landers) for discussion

- reading anything about Scarborough
- reading aloud in class
- picking magazines to read and discuss (e.g., "Ranger Rick" and "Owl")
- when frustrated or finished with work, picking up a magazine and talking about it
- group reading ("Sprint" series) with partners helping

By exposing students to the **library**, students developed their skills by:

- being encouraged to use the library
- finding resources to supplement lessons
- bringing books back to the classroom
- using picture books
- getting help in feeling comfortable in the library
- sharing books afterwards and discussing them with the librarian
- getting information related to topics discussed in class
- finding out where related reference materials are located (e.g., "National Geographic" and encyclopedias)
- discussing stories (e.g., "Find Waldo") that help them look for details

Other strategies used include:

- short plays with students taking roles
- listening to the radio, (music from different countries, weather reports, etc.)
- reading stories to students and asking them to predict what will happen - developing oral skills as a group
- integrating students with other classes (i.e., involve them with "regular" students)
- role playing requiring "Standard English" use only
- sending students to do most errands

- involving students in conflict resolution (i.e., active listening, reading body language) - pilot project this year with Values Centre
- "video to print" series
- co-operative activities

***Which strategies appeared to work?***

Some strategies worked better with some students than others and staff members pointed out that it is impossible to "please everyone". Furthermore, when using a strategy once or twice it is hard to tell if it is successful because there is often a cumulative effect. Success can also depend on the group involved, with some strategies being useful in one group but not in another (e.g., junior vs. senior grades).

With this caution in mind, the successful strategies included:

- giving students the freedom to write what they want
- teacher showing encouragement and enthusiasm which affects the success of students
- using the "video to print" series
- creating plays and videotaping plays
- reading newspapers and magazines
- writing a story in a journal about material supplied by the teacher
- picture books have been useful
- using filmstrips with writing at the bottom of the picture, or diagrams
- using "read aloud"
- using the radio
- using conflict resolution
- running errands
- engaging in co-operative activities

- students reading what they wrote and discussing how they felt about it

Some strategies that related specifically to the library were:

- visits to the library generate "spill-over visits" related to other subject areas
- the more frequent the class library visits, the better the relationship seems to be
- the more often a teacher has a class, the greater their willingness to go to the library
- the same days set aside for the same classes in the library works well

***How do you know the strategies worked?***

The student responses that indicated that the strategies worked were:

- good content response and range of response from students
- students thumb through materials and are inquisitive
- students never complain about the task and show enthusiasm
- students show interest
- students will bring in a paper to read to the teacher
- they want to know why they aren't reading when they want to
- students are more comfortable, easier to relate to them
- they are willing to talk about a picture book
- students pick up magazines on their own
- teacher checks back with other teachers to see how students handled the errands
- junior students seem more willing to participate in the library and are more involved even before the librarian becomes involved (perhaps they are more open because they are getting more library periods than the seniors)
- students are more productive in groups - they now go immediately to the groups - when asked directly they say they like the set up

***Which strategies did not work or should be improved? How do you know?***

Once again, the caution that some strategies work better with some students than with others should be kept in mind. Furthermore, the range of learning abilities and problems related to timing for students (external influences such as no family here, or family united after a long period of time or chronic absenteeism) can alter which strategies will or will not work. These effects should be studied over time.

The strategies that appeared not to work were:

- independent projects - four students out of 14 did not hand them in - perhaps gave too much - however, gave a similar project next term and the four are "working like crazy" - things change over time
- one student hates using the computer room - teacher is not trying to get unanimous "I like it"
- less of a response from students when he reads aloud than when they watch a video
- historical approach doesn't work if the students lack background (e.g., meaning of city) - teacher needs to realize where students need more information (e.g., can talk about a whale but they have no concept of its size)
- Time and Newsweek not of interest to students
- silent reading did not work
- group work was not successful - "euphemistic word for cheating" with these kids - not much reliance should be put on the work in groups, especially if the students are reluctant to work in the first place - results are suspect
- listening to tapes - perhaps the tapes are too fast - students got fidgety, shut it out
- CD Rom on the computer - students wanted to leave after five minutes - no graphics related to the topic, just print - perhaps start with pictures - not used to sequencing events when operating a computer
- initially the library was difficult - hard to get scheduling together

- computers not well used - teachers don't know how the network and the computer work - didn't work with them
- individual public speaking - teacher's expectations were too high
- students grouped in reading exercise

## Measurement Techniques

***What methods have you tried for collecting information from students to determine whether they have benefitted from your objectives for the literacy program?***

Several different methods of collecting information to determine whether the students have internalized the specific objectives outlined by classroom teachers are listed below:

### Teacher Records

- anecdotal comments made by teachers
- record who speaks in library classes and how often
- checklist of information provided by other departments who have had dealings with the students

### Student Records

- paper for students to sign out magazines
- seniors logged readings in the back of their journals
- can tell if general interest in reading is rising by how many books students take out of the library and whether they fall asleep in the library

### Tests

- attitude surveys
- multiple choice content review tests
- marks
- reading test used when Booster students are first being assessed - has used this same one to measure Booster students over time

- rates student participation in class on a scale of 1 to 3, both voluntary and non-voluntary

Observation

- classroom observation
- visual - viewing videotapes
- comprehension of material given
- journal observations
- personal observation - may be a bias but has "an ear"

An additional method used was:

- talk to other teachers who have had oral contact - informally

***What problems did you encounter?***

- anecdotal comments were difficult, didn't fit with teacher's method of operation - hard to remember the content by the end of class and couldn't make regular entries - scattered recording doesn't reflect happenings
- sign out of magazines - worked well for one month, then students stopped doing it and the teacher stopped checking
- seniors' logs - has to remind students to do this
- difficult to measure change in attitudes, intangibles are hard to measure
- time is the major problem
- students have a deficiency in reading skill (Grade 2-3 level) - limitations on how much work you can do with them
- nature of school - kids with the greatest disabilities are here and are picked up at 3:00 p.m. - changes your style a little bit and takes away from the schoo day - no extra work possible
- getting time to write notes
- remembering what happened for anecdotal diary
- immediate sign out of books after class is okay but signouts later are hard to track

- don't know everyone's name yet
- time was a problem - went from the journal to scale to a checklist

***Which methods seemed to work most efficiently? Samples?***

- surveys - removed teacher's potentially biased way of listening - teachers became a strategy in themselves since they made students reflective about reading, writing, and computers
- rely on observation to a great extent - have to "feel it" most of the time
- anecdotal - but needs classroom teacher to keep track of particular student interactions in addition to teacher's own records in the library
- Booster assessment

Samples of any instruments provided are on file in the Research Centre.

## Professional Development and Other Resources

***Have you attended any P.A. Days/workshops related to the literacy project? If yes, which ones? If no, why not?***

All the staff members in the literacy project at Osler have attended staff development activities within their school or those held by the Scarborough Board. A few did point out that school commitments affected how many they could attend outside the school, but that the school administration has been most supportive of this type of activity. They had to be sure to balance the importance of the workshops with the time away from class. Too much time away could be counterproductive.

### School-Based

Most of the staff members have attended literacy activities in the school run by the TSA or the Values Centre (e.g., communication and conflict resolution).

### Scarborough-Based

Most of the literacy workshops for the teachers from Osler involved in the literacy

project were held at the English Language Centre at G. B Little. Topics included small group learning, whole language, and the writing process. Some staff attended a workshop at the ESL Centre, some attended computer courses, and some the elementary school whole language program on a P.D. day.

One teacher stated that she had been to more P.D. days in a few months at Osler than in one year in another school.

***Were you able to integrate the content into your classroom/program? If not, why not?***

Generally the staff members felt that they were able to integrate the content of the P.A. Days/Workshops into their classrooms. They thought that it was more likely that integration will happen with a Scarborough workshop because these are usually related to the high schools specifically.

The ones that did not appear useful were the one related to "conferencing" which was not useful at the Osler level, and the one on "co-operative learning" which was too academic and too regimented for one teacher's teaching style. For another teacher, the information in the workshop was not relevant for the students who were intellectually above the typical Osler students and headed for collegiates and business and technical institutes.

One teacher stated that the strategies discussed in the workshops were "nothing new" from those taught at teachers' college where reading was emphasized.

***What other resources/materials have you found to be useful?***

Listed below are the resources/material teachers found useful during the first year

of the project:

- "Language Matters"
- articles distributed by the TSA with the relevant information highlighted
- "Scholastic" magazine ("Scholastic Scope" and "Scholastic Action") - for poor readers using themes
- Janus Read On/Write On books - series of short plays
- Tom Gratton series
- school library is the greatest resource
- Scholastic Book Services - simplified stories - some with morals - "Double Action Units"
- ESL Part 2
- English Language Centre reading course this year
- material from the English Language Centre
- travelogues to talk about countries
- videos of TV weather forecasts - basically visual
- people within the school - special education teachers have a lot of resources (ortho department has Metro materials)
- special Booster teachers at feeder school

## Role of the Teacher Specially Assigned

***What role has the TSA played in your class? In your school?***

The major role of the TSA in the class appears one of support, acting as a resource person and supplying materials.

### Support

- gives general support - makes the department and the teacher more effective
- an added support person

- gives teachers more confidence and a greater definition of their role
- is needed by teachers who are still in the "trial and error" stage
- shows that what the teacher is doing is effective and good
- someone from outside who is willing to give advice or help
- encouraging
- support in working on the computer

Resources

- consults TSA re planning staff development
- not an authority role - is the intermediary between head and teachers re strategies
- facilitator - "get togethers" of literacy project people - exchange of ideas
- what works, what doesn't
- Scarborough computer people - how to encourage kids to express themselves in writing - how to reward students
- school P.A. days - made use of computer and ESL information for literacy project
- computer publishing - excerpts of student writing
- keeps in touch and makes teacher aware of things relevant to literacy
- information - (e.g., publishers' clearance, where the money is hidden)
- keeps teacher up on possibilities for future resources
- literature on techniques and strategy
- saves teacher's time
- theory and background re literacy approach

Materials

- brought project materials - technical information
- resource books for "read aloud" - especially for class activities
- applicable classroom materials

- supplying everything - radio and magazines
- articles - teacher reads and files them for reference

Other comments regarding TSA's role were:

- sounding board - opportunity to share re what teacher is doing
- provides consultation re setting and defining objectives
- observed and talked with teacher
- observer in groups - helped as an individual re recording information in anecdotal records
- checks to see how things are going

One teacher commented that the TSA was not really utilized since everything was fine. The teacher feels constricted and rigid when the TSA deals with objectives and measurement. Students are not predictable so it is difficult to nail these down.

The role of the TSA within the school as a whole was not something about which the teachers seemed to be aware.

***Are there any things she might have done differently?***

One-half of the staff interviewed said that no revisions were necessary to the role of the TSA in the classroom. She was "very useful and jogs my memory so I rethink what I am doing", and she "fulfilled my expectations".

Those who had suggestions for changes in the role cited the following:

- recognize that because teachers didn't buy in does not necessarily mean they didn't because they didn't want to participate. They are at a low point in their enthusiasm. The TSA should just proceed and the level of enthusiasm will waver.
- the TSA is preoccupied with listing of objectives. Kids with strong negative feelings to school can't be tied down. TSA should be enhancing the learning process.

- TSA could demonstrate new or different strategies for even a part of a period.
- teacher would like to know what remedial teachers use that works with these students to see if the methods can be revised for Booster.

## Future Operation of the Project

***What would you like your literacy program objectives to be for the 1991-92 school year?***

One-half of the staff members interviewed said they would like the same or similar objectives for students next year, depending on the nature of the kids. The current objectives allow flexibility and give a core structure so that similar strategies could be used.

The staff development and sharing opportunities should be continued with the TSA acting as a resource in the development of objectives and strategies, and finding resources. As well, the extra support from the Language Centre should continue.

Those who considered changes in their objectives for **students** listed the following:

- help students become self-motivated to use available resources to expand their knowledge
- have students do more than assignments - more journal writing
- students will read more
- students will have better comprehension
- teach students strategies for living
- involve other teachers and groups in the school in the literacy project (e.g., two Booster programs)
- move students more toward an increase in written competency and track this
- develop oral skills in students - what they say and how they say it
- teach students to reason

In addition to the changes for students, one teacher listed some objectives for **teachers** to consider next year:

- develop an understanding of evaluation techniques
- use resources
- develop a better theoretical background
- create a more defined curriculum
- be able to state to students what they will learn (e.g., concepts, skills). They will be motivated by this type of thing and they are aware of their deficits. Students should be included in the process, strategies, and planning.

***Who will be the target students?***

Some staff members were unsure whether they would have the same students or the same type of students next year. Some will be the same (ESL, ESD). One teacher has, in the past, requested Grade 7 transition students.

Another teacher described next year's students as potentially immature kids who don't mature with time. The teacher wants to make a difference for these kids.

Some students will have been in the ESL upgrading program in the elementary system. Therefore, they will have had some experience with English and they can work on reading and reasoning.

Overall, it seemed to be a little too early to have a concrete answer to this question.

***How do you see the role of the TSA in the program next year?***

Generally, it was felt that the elements of the role should continue with consideration given to the following suggestions:

- more time given by the TSA to provide demonstration lessons and units, not for 10 minutes but three periods to demonstrate teaching strategies. This would be a "perk" to teachers as they will be expected to observe, not prepare; teachers with difficulties or who are unsure of new approaches would learn; or it would free up teachers to work with problem kids.
- make the theme more "hands on" - not a criticism, just if there is more time next year
- act as a liaison in a collaboration with the Maplewood staff in the sharing of information - in the past, Osler has worked with Maplewood
- wants to feel in touch with Maplewood and TSA is the link
- see to it that people become more efficient
- introduce new kinds of magazines and how to use them
- provide concrete ideas of what to try (e.g., different units) - show the things found to work
- act as a liaison among staff members re techniques - facilitator - a change from being a supplier of material
- evaluate activities in class and assist in evaluating students' levels which is hard for teacher to do with no training
- provide information on how to break down the reading process to look for progress (e.g., how to look for reading miscues)
- facilitate sharing among teachers to avoid duplication of content
- a final fantasy, run a program for parents on how to help kids since they do express their concerns

***What would you like to find out from the research into the literacy project?***

Staff members indicated four general topics regarding literacy about which they would like more research information:

1. Information about other literacy projects.
   - Are there some things others do with a similar population re literacy?
   - How have they evaluated and measured these programs?
   - What information can be gathered from other literacy projects (records kept, where they progressed, and what was used)?
   - What effective strategies have come out of other literacy studies?

2. Data collected to show whether they are making a difference with the students.
   - Are we making a difference?
   - Do some things make a bigger difference than others?
   - If there is no difference, why not? If there is a difference, how do we make a greater difference and continue to do so?
   - Will the levels of literacy rise?
   - Will the students' interest in books rise?
   - Will social knowledge the students have rise and will their comprehension levels go up?
   - Is there an increase in the students' love of reading? (if there isn't, "we are digging potatoes")
   - Will students use reading as a strategy for living?
   - Will there be an increase in library use next year among students who were studied this year?
   - Does continuing the literacy program increase the use of the library (to a stated maximum possible)?
   - Perhaps continue to track students who remain in classes included in the project this year?

3. What works?
   - What are other ways to achieve literacy?

- What other strategies can be used to enhance program?
- Which strategies have worked?
- What is the point of doing this if it is not effective?

4. Definition of literacy.

- What are other areas of literacy (e.g., computer literacy)?
- What is literacy - the capacity to read?
- What is the definition of functional literacy in our society - enjoyment?

Some additional questions raised were:

- What are the demands of the society our kids are in to determine what their functional literacy should be?
- How does development of literacy translate into relationships within the culture - what is kept, what is lost?

**Comments**

At the end of the interview, teachers were given the opportunity to make additional comments:

- at the beginning, the literacy project was nebulous. As we work on it, a central picture is emerging as to where we are going and what it is. There is now some definition.
- people are getting attention and help beyond what he can provide
- playing for a wider audience than the school and the class - has a forum for discussion
- hears from the teachers in a more systematic way about what is happening in their classes
- has enjoyed the open nature of this project
- people benefitted from the process and reflect on classroom practice
- there is no magic technique but we get help to do the best we can
- how specifically can we measure affective skills?

- what is the role of the teachers vs. the family/community?
- kids at Osler will probably go nowhere without reading
- how to measure the intangibles - "the joy and difference teaching here are the intangibles"
- have students achieve in the course of their lives self sufficiency and self-esteem
- consider results at Maplewood to see what they have done
- this has been a comprehensive questionnaire/interview
- he is growing as the kids are growing
- if there is a mental, material, or administrative block, he will bring to the attention of research
- feels it is important that research came in to ask him questions - keeps him thinking about his approach
- was a positive experience this year
- enjoyed interaction with not only students but especially teachers - more aware of what is here
- students are more at home in the library - is happening with all classes - students more comfortable in interacting with teacher
- now has much more interaction with those teachers in the literacy project than other staff - more a sense of working together
- would like to know what is happening in other participants' classes in the school
- perhaps create a measurement tool to be done verbally regarding strategies, class activities, etc., for students
- would be useful to see work of average literacy of an elementary age kid
- what does performance at a Grade 5 level really mean?
- perhaps see some elementary curriculum guidelines
- explore new language development computer programs (hypercard format)
- develop a semi curriculum with some of what to cover - very general things in Booster handout
- want to get involved more in curriculum development
- want to include students in planning strategies - better idea of the relationship

with objectives - expectations will be clarified

- provide parents with information on how to do meaningful reading activities with their children
- establish links across boards regarding literacy (e.g., project in East York)

## *2. Osler Administrator Interviews*

**Program Objectives**

***What were your objectives for the literacy project this year? Next year?***

Basic level schools were thought of as going nowhere. The administration wanted to show the public, Board, and other schools that they were providing the best possible programs, and that the students had not reached their potential but could grow and increase their skills. The system and the teachers needed to see that the students, though limited, had not reached their language ceiling.

In order to achieve this, they decided to address literacy in a more concrete way. Literacy became a school initiative and part of Curriculum Review, Development, and Implementation for the 1990-91 school year. This was also International Literacy Year.

The school administrators wanted the staff to buy into literacy. In order to do this, they got the Program Department on board and established a literacy project. The TSA from the English Language Centre became the driving force providing the expertise in establishing objectives and looking at outcomes. In addition, teachers were supported through seminars and sharing so that they could reach a common understanding of what they were trying to do with the students.

The focus was to increase the language-based program in curriculum at Osler by working with staff from a variety of interests and backgrounds. This would also indicate that something was in place to address literacy in the school.

Although the school has on file reading scores from 1987 and comprehension and math scores for every student, it is hard to share these with the public in a meaningful way. The administration thought it better to try to increase the number of skills students possessed rather than a .1 change on a reading test.

A final objective was to get many staff members involved so it was not just the responsibility of the library head. This has happened and it is growing as they work toward their goals.

## Professional Development and Other Resources

***Have you received any P.A./Staff Development with respect to the literacy project?***

Most of the development activities attended by the administrators were held at the English Language Centre. Some of these were reading sessions and some were common school sessions. Other activities included a co-operative learning strategies workshop presented by Values Education staff, and the ESL/Computer Language program at Chartland Junior Public School.

In addition to the Scarborough events, at least one administrator tried to attend the inschool meetings on a regular basis to give concrete support to the project.

Aside from the "formal" staff development activities, the TSA continues to keep them

informed about related information and conferences.

***Have you provided staff development activities/programs related to literacy project?***

Staff meetings are a time to keep staff members updated regarding the literacy project. This is useful because staff turnover has necessitated bringing new people on board. They are also encouraged to share materials, etc., that they have found to be useful in the classroom.

The literacy staff development objectives were backed up with budget for materials and time for conferences which enabled the administrators to provide a variety of conferences through a school-based staff development pilot project.

Finally, when articles are found that are relevant to the project, copies are distributed to the staff.

***What sources of support/materials have you used in the implementation of the program?***

The TSA is the "cornerstone for the project and as such is a most valuable resource". She can provide information on how the literacy development they are supporting is actually supported in the classroom. This adds to the administrators' language information. Other things that were cited as sources of support were:

- involvement in the classrooms and discussions with people there about what they are doing give a more complete idea of the objectives and outcomes.
- the original literacy proposal was written with members of the Maplewood High School staff and conferencing with the school administration keeps them in touch.
- the initial outlay of money on tapes and book stands provided materials for the classrooms. Currently, some teachers are looking for new things to help other

teachers (e.g., library material).

- some investigation was done into a language-based computer program. This is a new program for individual and independent learning to free up teachers to concentrate on a couple of students.

**Role of the Teacher Specially Assigned**

***How do you see the role of the TSA this year? Next year?***

**This year** the TSA was instrumental in the successful implementation of the project in that teacher ownership would not have been as great. The administrators needed someone to co-ordinate the project to make sure measurable objectives were set and to help teachers work toward an outcome. The TSA was essential in getting the project off the ground. She knew the students and understood their needs, could facilitate movement, and meshed with the expertise of the teachers. She brought growth into the class and provided a different perspective and direction. People responded to her and her professional expertise.

She was included in staff meetings when it was relevant to her role (e.g., self-esteem, values, computers). The rapport she now has with the staff allows her to "pop into places" to see what is happening. Finally, the TSA kept the administrators up to date and provided them with relevant information.

The administrators see her role **next year** more as a resource person offering support seminars. She can withdraw and become more of a facilitator where needed, instead of being a "conscience for teachers". With less frequent monitoring, it would be a weaning process. This cut back seems to have happened to some extent toward the end of this year.

After the first year of growth, perhaps the focus will become more specific; that is, concentrate on an end product. Literacy will be evaluated under a CRDI initiative and the

team will speak to the literacy project people to get their plan for next year.

## Future Operation of the Project

***What are your objectives for the literacy project next year?***

The project needs to go for another year. As can be seen from the minutes of meetings, there is more direction or ownership among teachers. Perhaps this can be increased.

Teaching strategies that are different from long term practice could be addressed and teachers could be encouraged to experiment with different approaches. Together the staff members can look at what they have been doing and what progress has been made. From this they could identify the changes and revise and expand objectives where necessary.

***What would you like to find out from the research into the literacy project next year?***

The administrators indicated that research gives credibility and status to what is going on in the school. Having research involved promotes accountability, keeps thoughts on objectives, and keeps literacy in the forefront for teachers. From this viewpoint, the following questions were raised:

- What are teachers actually doing in the classroom compared to what they say they are doing? (indicators of commitment to objectives)
- Are they actually addressing literacy?
- What does research see in the school as a whole related to objectives in literacy?
- Are we "doing a good job"?
- We hear about mainstreaming which is creating an environment that could be demeaning. What is good? Are we addressing the needs of kids?
- Are we delivering the most appropriate program for these kids? Is there an ideal program?

- If a student feels good about reading, does this affect self-esteem?

- If research finds changes/improvements in these students, can we create criteria for a successful program? This could give a common starting point (i.e., for a successful language program we need to have these as a starting point).

**Comments**

At the end of the interview, the administrators were invited to make any additional comments:

- One explained that 16 years ago, the school was a "pod" system (e.g., the automotive pod was where shop and academic co-operated). There was a greater meshing of language development in both academic and technical areas. This system changed and communication between the areas diminished.

- What is the level of communication since the literacy project began? If the project can begin to address this, all the better.

- This literacy project is long term and, hopefully, it can remain as long as need be. Perhaps all teachers at Osler will end up teaching language. In the meantime, it is necessary to keep talking and sharing in order to get ownership among staff members.

- Maplewood and Osler **must** continue to work together; their curriculum management plans were done together in 1987. Both schools should keep together with the whole thing and share results.

- A final fantasy would be that "we have the best program for these kids and I know your child will be able to achieve a set of criteria 'benchmarks' during a certain period at the school. Here's what we can do for your child". Therefore, the children do not have unrealistic expectations.

### *3. Program Department Staff Interviews*

Three of the four Program Department staff members were from the English Language Centre; the fourth being a representative from administration. While their degree of involvement in the Literacy Project varied greatly, there were still many commonalities in the topics of their responses to the questions asked. However, their perspectives were often varied.

**Program Objectives**

***What were your objectives for the literacy project this year?***

The major objective of the respondents was to create awareness/knowledge among teachers regarding whole language: strategies, materials, information, and evaluation methods:

- refresh or make people aware of current strategies or practices within reading
- expose people to new material especially for their own learning (need to talk to integrate)
- provide them with a "literacy project update" to let them know what has happened
- provide information to teachers; visit publishers for teachers and pass along information
- promote evaluation as part of the learning process and look at different methods of evaluation
- plant seeds in the writing process
- teach English teachers how to get involved in a quality reading program
- ensure that teachers gain enough knowledge to implement the program so students will become better readers; provide them with expert knowledge of the reading/writing process
- train staff members so they become resource people

A second objective was to provide modelling of strategies in class:

- get in class and touch base with kids to get a sense of the clientele to build a bridge between teachers' and kids' levels of functioning (e.g., modelling "talk through")
- establish relationships with teachers and work as a facilitator as the teacher should be (i.e., modelling interaction with teachers; updating self as teachers should be updating themselves to be a source for kids)
- help teachers become comfortable with Program Department facilitating the learning process

Raising the literacy and self-esteem levels of students was a third objective:

- raise literacy level of students
- improve students' reading and writing

The objectives from the original literacy project were carried out or consolidated in the current project. It was the task of Program staff to ensure that events kept going in the direction in which they started and that the focus on the reading and writing processes continued.

In the meantime, staff recognized that the groups in the schools would need training in more areas than just literacy (e.g., CRDI, writing process, evaluation). The collaborative approach is one method through which objectives can be achieved together.

**Professional Development and Other Resources**

***Have you received any PA/staff development with respect to the literacy project?***

Two of the Program Department staff had received no staff development specifically related to the literacy project. A third attended events not especially related to literacy. There are "larger processes that provide vehicles through which people can put things into effect, establish goals, and maintain order and direction (e.g., CRDI at Eaton Hall, Pratt seminar, Scarborough inservice on evaluation - Neil Graham, and conferences and conventions on staff development). These events contribute to the organizational process when "you can't have a direct hand in this from the school point of view".

The remaining staff member attended literacy-related conferences held by the International Reading Association, the Ontario Reading Association, Basic Level's - "Concern's 90", "Literature Alive" held by Scholastic books (Grade 7-8 "read aloud"), and a course on evaluation hosted by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. In addition to these external conferences, the Program Department's staff development program on running workshops was helpful. Participants shared anxieties regarding going into schools as part of their role. These staff development events were useful for personal understanding and affirmed the staff member's personal philosophy of literacy. It became clear that it is possible for teachers to create an environment as a motivating influence rather than controlling students.

***Have you provided staff development activities/programs related to the literacy project?***

While it is necessary to share information regarding activities/programs with the participants on any project, the process should occur only when people are ready and willing so they do not feel "stepped on". When the sharing of ideas occurs, it is only "baby steps" at this point in time. During the school day, staff members are rushed because of the number of things happening. People can't listen if they are too busy.

Many of the staff development activities were held at the English Language Centre: co-operative planning regarding "Language Matters", sharing experiences, CRDI, evaluation, working collaboratively, and whole language strategies.

"There is not enough staff development in their own areas; it is more at the system level, particularly in reading and math. Teachers must understand how students learn and develop conceptual knowledge of the stages." This must be ongoing and should combine conferences with lots of inhouse development (e.g., reading, discussion). There is a "danger of rejecting new information; staff needs input constantly". "It is important to try to get people to keep open minds and to respect the work of other people."

***What sources of support/materials have you used in the implementation of the program?***

Three of the four Program Department staff members provided input with respect to resources they used. The role of the fourth staff member is that of a facilitator and in that capacity this question did not apply.

The **materials** discussed by the participants were:

- "Language Matters" as a clear, concise base
- "Reading Teacher" journal
- JK-6 Centre's vertical file
- information from the Reading Specialist course in the winter
- articles from the Language and Research Centres on such topics as adult basic literacy
- ESL - share materials
- publishers' reading materials
- materials from Oxford University Press to be developed more in keeping with needs of basic level. There are not many materials for kids who don't read well, appropriate to their interest
- display board for books - change in environment as well as strategies
- "Creating Classrooms for Authors" provided basis for inservices with both staffs last June
- "Southam Report" - staff member doesn't agree with a lot of information on literacy
- "International Literacy Year" Ministry reports helped set a context for what they are doing. It is a disabling thing not to be able to read.
- "Journal of Reading"

People who served as **resource people** for the Program staff responding were:

- Language Centre staff
- ESL staff
- Don Robb - green light for Literacy Project and provides input and money
- Rollit Goldring - not active in the program but provides support
- Barb Howes, TSA on site, is an important resource and a link to all people outside of the school
- MaryLou Soutar-Hynes, former Scarborough staff member, re writing process

- Judy Clarke, Values Education, re collaborative learning
- John MacInnis at Nelson re writing and talking - using the language experience approach with older kids

## Role of the Teacher Specially Assigned

***How do you see the role of the TSA this year? Next year?***

**This year**, the Program staff saw the role of the TSA as an integral part of the Literacy Project working with school staff in the following ways:

- modelling teaching, a guide and a support
- working as a facilitator with teachers, an observer letting teachers know what they are doing with kids
- providing feedback to staff members re input of others (e.g., administration)
- working with teachers in June to develop final proposal
- visiting publishers
- transforming role as time passes
- providing information regarding what is happening related to objectives
- making it clear to the staff in both sites that this support is not just lip service; the resources are where the mouth is
- developing a relationship over time with teachers - trust
- acting as a safety net. Change doesn't always go well initially.

**Next year,** there were patterns suggested that were common to the two schools, and some that were unique. The **common elements** of the role of the TSA according to Program Department members were:

- working with the schools to set clear objectives which will help to clarify the role further - collaboration
- working with teachers to help them understand their role

- having more involvement with teachers in the literacy program
- following a concrete plan of action with staff regarding the literacy project
- TSA is responsible for two schools for only 50 per cent of her time. The other 50 per cent is occupied with other duties. This is too demanding for one person to do. Now the school staff will be involved in maintenance of what they have implemented and will engage more in reflection with the TSA.
- working with staff in the refinement of the program that comes from reflection

The two Scarborough high schools themselves differ and this will determine to a large degree the role of the TSA in each school next year. Osler is looking at selected aspects of whole language. The TSA role needs to change but has to fit in with what is planned. They will have clear objectives and have more direction than this year. There is not a common group goal but is defined more in terms of the individual person. The role of the TSA will evolve as the program progresses next year. "Some things are predictable but also become more flexible."

## Future Operation of the Project

***What are your objectives for the literacy project next year?***

The objectives in place were seen by all Program staff interviewed as continuing. Much discussion centred around **refining and focussing** them.

- research is forcing thought on the objectives and establishing parameters. This can provide direction and information regarding perceptions.
- help teachers focus more on what they did in class and how it fits with their objectives
- the staff will consider what happened this year and set objectives for next year this June
- literacy will be the primary focus of the school

Some input was given with respect to **materials**.

- bring materials into the school

- continue the program at a high level with continued support from the Program Department
- extend focus on literacy and keep environment rich in texts, etc.

Other objectives centred around collecting evidence that by the end of 1991-92, the program will be working and the kids will be functionally literate. A final point was that with the transition years issue, the timing has been perfect for this study. These two issues could be pulled together next year. A few objectives listed were school-specific:

- meet with staff and get more people involved or more collaboration so they understand what each is doing
- Special school conference in the fall and a February P.D. day
- want to involve people as much as possible

***What would you like to find out from the research into the literacy project next year?***

Some comments were made about the research methodology used this year. One Program staff member felt that the interviews would give a more detailed and personal appraisal of what people are doing and should provide interesting results. The way research defined its role as it goes along was appreciated. It was responding to need rather than a preconceived idea or format.

Continued research as a support and providing information allows the teachers to become reflective practitioners. The reflections they articulate are used by research to provide valuable feedback for decision making. It provides a basis for communication and works in concert with other aspects of the program to provide a pathway. This perspective can aid decision making and give a better sense of direction. "If people don't know why you are here, how can they ask questions?"

Specific questions to be investigated by the research were:

- how do administrators perceive the project and the role of the TSA?
- what are their expectations for the role next year?
- what instruments can be used to assess student and teacher progress other than just personal perceptions? (try to make subjectivity more objective)
- have teachers improved their skills in delivery of the literacy program? Are they better professionals?
- is the program in place working? Are children improving their reading and writing?
- have we changed teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour regarding teaching reading and writing to these students?
- are there any attitudinal changes among teachers and students?
- how do teachers feel about literacy and their role?
- has their knowledge base changed in literacy learning?
- what are the changes in the administrators' views of the literacy project?
- have vice-principals taken on a more realistic view re the learning process of teachers?

**Comments**

The Program Department staff members being interviewed were invited to make additional comments:

- while research has clarified direction and forced focussing of teachers, it still feels like a judgmental experience - but this is part of learning
- hope teachers and administrators are aware that this is a "feeling out" year and while there is no cut and dried development, things have been changing slowly
- in schools already loaded with innovations some things have to be removed ("planned abandonment") to allow for new programs. People can feel overworked doing everything and the literacy project is even changing class format. What will be eliminated from the agenda?

- outcome-based program - can we identify what learned outcomes should be and map back to strategies and objectives to ensure outcomes?

- this has been important. The evolution of it has been strange but has created a good relationship and good support for staff

- the secondary school community needs to know that it is okay and respectable to get help for teaching reading. This has brought the two panels closer together. Furthermore, the two high schools are now represented at heads meeting,

- with the high school heads attending heads' meetings, the schools are involved and they have the opportunity to seek knowledge and support for their problems

- our mission statement states that we are life long learners. This means staff as well.

- the exercise has been very positive for schools and for the system

- the hope is that the Literacy Project keeps going long enough that it becomes built in to the way these schools operate: part of the curriculum, the natural and normal thing to do

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The **general objectives** being addressed by the Osler staff members were both cognitive and affective in content. The cognitive objectives included creating in students an awareness of reading materials and resources, improving oral skills and literacy skills in students who have none in their own language, and improving levels of reading comprehension. The affective objective addressed enhancing student self-esteem and attitude toward school, and establishing students' enjoyment of language and the desire to develop language skills. **Specifically**, the staff addressed writing and reading. Other objectives included helping students feel familiar with the library, improving their ability to listen, enhancing their curiosity, encouraging the development of positive self-esteem, and, in some cases, decreasing their very vocal approaches.

The **general objectives** of the school administrators were more global in nature. The desire was to change the attitudes of the public, Board, and other schools toward basic level schools. The system and the teachers needed to see that the students, though limited, have not reached their language ceiling. It was important to encourage the staff to "buy into" literacy. The focus was to increase the language-based program in curriculum at Osler by working with the staff to address the issue of literacy, through support seminars and sharing, in order to reach a common understanding of what they were trying to do with the students.

With a focus similar to the school administrators, the Program staff stressed the support and training of teachers in the reading/writing process. Overall, their major objective was to create awareness/knowledge among teachers regarding whole language: strategies, materials, information, and evaluation methods. Through this, they hoped, as did the teachers, to raise the literacy and self-esteem levels of the students.

Overall, the **target students** this year ranged in grade from seven to 12 and in age from 14 to 18. Furthermore, the student population was made up of different subgroups. Along with the traditional Osler students, there were students from ESL requiring upgrading, ESD, ESL/D withdrawal, and Booster which dealt with cultural adjustment. They were, in some cases, disinterested students, underchallenged or overchallenged, with a wide range of intellectual ability. In the ESL/D/Booster programs, many were illiterate in their own language, socially immature, and often in their first school setting.

There did not appear to be one or two major **teaching strategies** that teachers used with the students; rather it was an eclectic approach. It was pointed out by the staff that the success of some strategies depended on the characteristics of the students. Indicators that the selected strategies worked included good content response and range of response from students, no complaints about the task, students bringing in or picking up reading materials on their own, and productivity in a group of students.

Some strategies that appeared not to work were: independent projects, historical approach if students lack background, silent reading, group work, use of computers, and listening to tapes.

Teachers listed several methods for collecting **evaluative information on student progress**: teacher records, student records, tests, and observation. Problems encountered using these methods were: anecdotal comments were difficult and content hard to remember at the end of a class, lack of student commitment to logs, and lack of teacher time to record. Those methods that did work were surveys, observation, and Booster assessment.

Both staff and school administrators have attended **staff development** activities within their school and those held at the English Language Centre. Other activities included workshops provided by the Values Education staff and the ESL/Computer Language program at a public school. In addition, the TSA keeps them up-to-date with relevant information and gives them support.

Generally the staff members felt that they were able to integrate the content of the P.A. Days/Workshops into their classrooms. They thought that it was more likely that integration will happen with a Scarborough workshop because these are usually related to the high schools specifically.

Since the orientation of the Program staff was more toward the organizational process, their staff development tended to address "the larger processes that provide vehicles through which people can put things into practice". The TSA was most involved in literacy-related conferences, since the role gives direct opportunities for feedback to both the school and Program staff.

The school administrators held staff meetings to keep staff members updated regarding the literacy project and encourage staff to share any materials they considered to be useful in the classroom. Budget support for materials and time for conferences allowed administrators to provide a variety of conferences through a school-based staff development pilot project.

The Program Department staff, English Language Centre staff in particular, held staff development activities which included co-operative planning regarding "Language

Matters", sharing experiences, CRDI, evaluation, working collaboratively, and whole language strategies. These were not necessarily related to the project but "teachers must understand how students learn and develop conceptual knowledge of the stages."

All three groups interviewed agreed that the TSA provided them with a variety of **support materials**; for the school administrators she was the "cornerstone of the project". Additional support materials found to be useful to school staff included "Language Matters", articles distributed by the TSA school library, English Language Centre reading course, people within the school, and special Booster teachers at feeder school.

For the school administrators, their involvement in the classrooms provided them with information. As well, "the original literacy proposal was written with members of the Maplewood High School staff and having conferences with the school administration keeps them in touch".

A variety of resources were cited by Program Department staff: "Language Matters", "Reading Teacher" Journal, ESL Centre, "Journal of Reading" just to name a few. In addition, they listed several resource people; for example, Language Centre staff, Program Department administrators for their support, ESL staff, and Values Education staff.

All three groups interviewed agreed that the **TSA** was instrumental **this year** in getting the project off the ground. In addition to general support and perspective, her professional expertise in the area gave teachers more confidence and a greater definition of their role. She could point out what is effective and good to teachers in the classrooms. Both

the staff and students enjoyed a special rapport with her. Furthermore, the materials and resources she provided were an integral part of her role during the year.

The role of the **TSA next year** was seen differently by staff members when compared to school administrators and Program staff. The teachers wanted her role to be similar next year with more time spent in demonstrating teaching strategies, introducing new magazines, providing concrete descriptions of what to try, acting as a liaison among staff members regarding techniques, and evaluating activities in class.

On the other hand, school administrators and Program staff saw her role more as a resource person offering support seminars. She should withdraw and become more of a facilitator where needed, instead of being a "conscience for teachers". It will become more of a weaning process. The TSA will help schools set objectives, work with staff to help them understand their role, and assist them in the maintenance of what they have implemented and refining their program. Since only 50 per cent of the TSA's time has been allotted for the literacy project in two schools, the job will be very demanding.

When asked about their **objectives** for the program **next year**, one-half of the staff members said they would like the same or similar objectives for students next year. In addition to these, some changes for both students and staff were listed. The administrators felt the direction and ownership among teachers could be improved and different teaching strategies could be addressed.

The objectives of the Program staff for next year centred around refining and focussing this year's objectives. To assist in this process, more materials would be provided

to "keep the environment rich in texts, etc". Furthermore, they will work with the staff in curriculum development, writing process, and evaluation. The bottom line will be to collect evidence that the program is working and, the students are more functionally literate.

It was unclear whether the staff would have the same students or the same type of **students next year**. Overall, it seemed to be a little too early to have a concrete answer to the nature of the population to be included.

It was hoped by teachers that **future research** into the literacy project may provide: information about other literacy projects, data to show whether they are making a difference with the students, information of what works with these students, and a definition of literacy. The school administrators indicated their belief that having research involved promotes accountability, keeps thoughts on objectives, and keeps literacy in the forefront for teachers. There was interest in getting more information on what teachers are actually doing in the classroom, and whether the school is "doing a good job" with respect to literacy. Furthermore, is it possible to create criteria for a successful program from the results of this study?

Continued research into the project was seen by Program staff and school administrators as providing support and information to allow the teachers to become reflective practitioners. This can "provide a basis for communication and works in concert with other aspects of the program to provide a pathway. The major question remains: "are we improving reading, writing, and comprehension?"

## FUTURE PLANS

The results of this study will be discussed with the Osler staff at the end of the school year to enable the staff to map out various aspects of the literacy project for the 1991-92 school year. This will be done with members from the English Language Centre and the Research Centre present. It is hoped that together a final plan for the research to be conducted next year will be developed.